

Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

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O 091720Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6841

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 PARIS 22983

NODIS CHEROKEE

FOR THE ACTING SECRETARY FROM THE AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: MNUC PK FR
SUBJECT: FRENCH REPROCESSING PLANT FOR PAKISTAN

1. ON AUGUST 8 DE GUIRINGAUD TOLD ME IN STRICT
CONFIDENCE HOW THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO PROCEED
ON THE PAKISTANI REPROCESSING ISSUE IN HOPES OF (A)
BUYING A SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT OF ADDITIONAL TIME AND
(B) PUTTING THE PAKISTANIS IN A POSITION IN WHICH THEY
WILL HAVE TO ACCEPT A PLANT NOT CAPABLE OF PRODUCING
PLUTONIUM. DE GUIRINGAUD EXPLAINED THAT HE WAS
GIVING US THIS HIGHLY SENSITIVE INFORMATION IN ADVANCE
BECAUSE WE WOULD HAVE A CRUCIAL ROLE TO PLAY AFTER
RPT AFTER THE FRENCH MAKE THEIR MOVE. MEANWHILE, HE
WOULD LIKE TO KNOW OUR REACTION. OBVIOUSLY, ANY LEAK OF
THE FRENCH INTENTION WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY BLOW
UP THE WHOLE OPERATION, CAUSING A CRISIS IN FRENCH-
PAKISTANI RELATIONS AND PUTTING US IN CONSIDERABLE DIFFICULTY
WITH THE FRENCH. I THEREFORE REQUEST THAT
THIS BE HELD ON THE STRICTEST NEED TO KNOW BASIS.

2. AFTER SUMMARIZING THE HISTORY OF THIS SUBJECT,
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GOING BACK TO 1972, AND IMPLYING THAT NEITHER HE NOR
GISCARD WOULD HAVE MOVED IN THIS DIRECTION, DE GUIRINGAUD
EXPLAINED THAT FRANCE HAS THUS FAR TURNED
ASIDE REPEATED OVERTURES BY AGHA SHAHI TO COME TO PARIS
TO SEEK RECONFIRMATION OF FRENCH WILLINGNESS TO PROCEED WITH THE
CONTRACT. DE GUIRINGAUD, HOWEVER, DECIDED TO
DELAY SEEING AGHA SHAHI UNTIL AFTER THE

SEVERN POWER MEETING IN PARIS AND FRENCH ACCEPTANCE OF INFCE HAD GENERATED THE NECESSARY MOMENTUM AND CREATED A NEW SITUATION. THIS, ACCORDING TO DE GUIRINGAUD, HAS GIVEN THE NEW BASIS FOR INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS ON NON-PROLIFERATION AND, INDEED, CHANGED THE ATMOSPHERE FOR INTERNATIONAL DISCUSSIONS.

3. ACCORDINGLY, DEGUIRINGAUD IS SENDING WORD TO THE PAKISTANI GOVERNMENT THAT HE IS PREPARED TO SEE AGHA SHAHI SOMETIME BETWEEN ABOUT SEPT 5 AND SEPT 15.

4. DE GUIRINGAUD'S PLAN IS TO MAKE A PRESENTATION ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES:

--FRANCE HAS SIGNED A CONTRACT AND IT INTENDS TO HONOR ITS COMMITMENT.

--HOWEVER, SINCE FRENCH-PAKISTANI TALKS FIRST BEGAN ON THE MATTER IN 1972 (CONTRACT SIGNED IN 1974) THE RELEVANT TECHNIQUES HAVE SUBSTANTIALLY CHANGED.

--FRANCE, THEREFORE, PROPOSES TO REVISE THE PLANS FOR THE REPROCESSING PLANT SO THAT IT WILL FURNISH A PRODUCT WHICH, PERHAPS WITH SOME SUPPLEMENTAL TREATMENT, CAN BE USED REICLTLY SECRET

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ONLY AS REACTOR FUEL.

-FRENCH AND PAKISTANI EXPERTS SHOULD REVIEW THE ENTIRE MATTER AND REACH AGREEMENT ON REVISION OF PLANS FOR THE PLANT. MEANWHILE, HOWEVER, THE FRENCH WOULD SEND NO MORE EQUIPMENT BASED ON OLD PLANS.

5. IRRESPECTIVE OF HOW THE PAKISTANIS MIGHT REALLY FEEL ABOUT THAT-- AND WHATEVER THE INTRNAL PRESSURES MIGHT BE FROM THE MILITARY OR OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE POWER STRUCTURE IN PAKITAN -- THE PAKISTANIS WOULD HAVE TO LIMIT THEIR OUTWARD PROTEST: OTHERWISE THEY WOULD BE, IN EFFECT, ADMITTING TO THE WORLD THAT THEY WANT THE REPROCESSING PLANT IN ORDER TO OBTAIN PLUTONIUM. IN SUCH AN EVENTUALITY, DE GUIRINGAUD IS CONFIDENT THAT HE CAN PERSUADE GISCARD TO CANCEL THE CONTRACT.

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NODIS CHEROKEE

FOR THE ACTING SECRETARY FROM THE AMBASSADOR

6. DE GUIRINGAUD BELIEVES IT MORE LIKELY THAT THE PAKISTANIS WILL PROTEST ON GROUNDS OF INCREASED COST RATHER THAN A CHANGE IN THE CHARACTER OF THE PRODUCT TO BE PRODUCED BY THE REPROCESSING PLANT. THE FRENCH SAY THERE WOULD INDEED BE AN INCREASE IN COST, PERHAPS ON THE ORDER OF SOME \$10-12 MILLION. (COMMENT: IT WAS CLEAR IN CONTEXT OF THE CONVERSATION THAT THIS WAS A VERY ROUGH ESTIMATE AND WE SHOULD NOT TAKE IT AS A FIRM FIGURE.)

7. AFTER HE HAS MADE HIS PITCH TO AGHA SHAHI, DE GUIRINGAUD WOULD LIKE US TO FOLLOW UP WITH THE PAKISTANIS TO REASSURE THEM THAT PARIS IS OFFERING AN HONORABLE WAY OUT: THAT ACCEPTANCE OF THE FRENCH OFFER WOULD PUT THEM CLEAR OF THE SYMINGTON AMENDMENT; AND THAT THE US WOULD BE WILLING TO HELP WITH THE SUPPLEMENTARY COSTS. WITH REGARD TO COST, DE GUIRINGAUD EMPHASIZED THAT NEITHER THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT NOR PRIVATE COMPANY (ST. GOBAIN) WOULD BE IN A POSITION TO PAY. MOREOVER, HE INTERPRETS HIS PREVIOUS UNDERSTANDINGS WITH SECRETARY KISSINGER ON THIS SUBJECT TO BE STILL IN FORCE; I. EM THAT WE WOULD BE PREPARED TO HELP WITH THE SUPPLEMENTARY FINANCIAL

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COSTS IF A WAY OUT COULD BE FUND TO MEET OUR DECISERATA ON NON-PROLIFERATION.

8. WHATEVER THE ULTIMATE OUTCOME, DE GUIRINGAUD DOES

NOT SEEM TO ANTICIPATE AN IMMEDIATE, FLAT PAKISTANI REJECTION. HE CONSIDERS IT MORE LIKELY THAT THE PAKISTANIS WOULD GO ALONG WITH SOME BILATERAL EXPERTS' REVIEW WHICH OUGHT AT THE VERY LEAST TO TAKE ABOUT SIX MONTHS. BY THEN, PAKISTAN WOULD BE HEAVILY ENGAGED IN INFCE WHICH SHOULD PUT THEM UNDER ADDITIONAL PRESSURE NOT TO GO TOO FAR.

9. I ASKED WHETHER THE FRENCH ARE TRULY CONFIDENT THAT DIFFERENT TECHNOLOGY WOULD GET AROUND THE DANGER OF PRODUCING WEAPONS GRADE MATERIAL. DE GUIRINGAUD REPEATED THAT HE BELIEVES FRENCH TECHNOLOGY CAN GIVE THE PAKISTANIS A PLANT PRODUCING AN ENRICHED MATERIAL WHICH, WITH SOME SUPPLEMENTARY TREATMENT AND SHAPING INTO FUEL RODS, COULD BE USED ONLY AS REACTOR FUEL. FOR THE PAKISTANIS TO TAKE THE PRODUCT OF THIS PLANT AND TURN IT INTO PLUTONIUM WOULD BE TECHNICALLY POSSIBLE BUT WOULD REQUIRE AN ENTIRE ADDITIONAL PLANT WHOSE CONSTRUCTION WOULD BE EASILY DETECTABLE.

10. PRIOR TO THIS EXCHANGE, I HAD BEIEFLY OUTLINED OUR SUSPICIONS ABOUT PAKISTANI INTENTIONS. LOCKE WILL NOW FOLLOW UP IN MORE DETAIL WITH DE LABOULAYE. I SENSED THAT FRENCH WELCOME THIS INFORMATION BECAUSE SOME OF THEM AT ANY RATE HAVE HAD THEIR OWN SUSPICIONS. THUS THE EMPHASIS IN THE NEW PROPOSAL ON TESTING PAKISTANI INTENT.

11. ONCE AGAIN LET ME EMPHASIZE SENSITIVITY OF THESE DISCUSSIONS. IN ADDITION TO REACTION WE MIGHT HAVE, IT IS CLEAR
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TO ME THAT AT SOME POINT PRIOR FRENCH TALK WITH PAKISTANIS WE WULD WISH TO AGREE ON EXACT NATURE OF OUR INTERVENTION AND PERHAPS ALSO HAVE BERY DISCREET TALK ABOUT TECHNICAL DEYAILS OF FRENCH PLAN.

12. OTHER PARTS OF MY CONVERSATION ARE BEING TRANSMITTED SEPARATELY.
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